RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

A CORRESPONDENT, W. W. P., says—"I don't remember ever seeing a whistle worked, or sounded, by compressed air, contained in something as secure as Æolus's present to old Ulysses, and let out by valves or stopcocks at the will of the guard, suggested as a mode of communication between this functionary and his Bellerophon or Pegasus in a railway train. The same, with some addition, might be adopted as a means of calling the guard's attention to the wants of the passengers."—Always saving and excepting the ingenious double whistle-pump or squirt-whistle for the use of *passengers*, who really must not—cannot—be allowed the use of such an instrument *unless or until* the means of "travelling to the carriages" be provided for the guards thus 'called,'—perhaps one of the best modifications of the whistle to such purposes would be that in which the 'compressed air' is 'fixed air' itself, as it used to be named, or carbonic acid gas, which can be readily and voluminously evolved from marble or other carbonate of lime by help of oil of vitriol, as already suggested. Certainly marble is the securest if not the most classical of all possible reservoirs of 'whistling winds,' not even excepting the iron boreas bottles of the Baron Von Rathen, who might benefit, mayhap, by this hint for behoof of his "compressed air locomotive."——An application of the whistle signal between guard and driver, but with no other compressing apparatus than the human lungs, has lately been adopted on some carriages built for the Shrewsbury and Birmingham Company. The whistle is placed near to the driver's ear, and the air is transmitted through gutta percha tubes, coupled air-tight between the carriages. The directors of this company merit honourable acknowledgment, as do those of the Eastern Counties, for the manifestation of a desire to consult the public safety by the trial of signals. The former have also improved the ventilation and lighting of their carriages, and have provided stuffed seats for the second-class, and close protection from the weather for the third. And that increased attention to the public safety and comfort constitutes but an enlightened system of self-interest we have had frequent occasion to prove. Perhaps the most recent instance of this is the fact that 750*l.* damages have just been awarded to the widow of an *employé*, at 1*l.* a-week, in the service of the Electro-telegraph Company, killed from want of a break, which, even by the rules of the Company itself—the Lancashire and Yorkshire—ought to have been attached to the carriage in which he was seated. Had there, even minus the break, been some mode of communication between passenger, guard, and driver, these heavy damages on a single result of accidents so often numerously fatal or injurious, would have been saved or avoided. ——The construction of the Tyne Docks, at Jarrow Slake, and the extensive works connected therewith, is to be commenced almost immediately. The directors of the York, Newcastle, and Berwick line have announced their intention to receive tenders for the same up to 22nd January.——The 117 arches of the Bury line contain 26,187,000 bricks. The large arch over the tunnel and works of the North-Western, alluded to last week, which is 99 feet span, and 64 on the skew, contains, it is said, 2,261,000 bricks, 48,000 cubic feet of timber, and 23,140 superficial feet of 3-inch plank. In these arches 34,000 casks of cement have been used.

NORTHAMPTON ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY.—A committee was held on 4th inst., the Marquis of Northampton in the chair. Plans for the church at Hartwell were exhibited, and, with a few modifications, approved of. The idea suggested by the Norman arcade of the old church, which is preserved, has been carried out in the new design. The restoration of St. Peter's and St. Sepulchre's, Northampton, were brought before the society. Viscount Alford and Lady M. Alford were elected members. Report was made of the progress of the works under the society's superintendence at Rothwell chancel. The Bedfordshire Archæological and Architectural Society proposed a joint meeting in the spring, and Higham Ferrers was agreed upon.

GRANITE IN CONSTRUCTION.

IT is truly matter of regret to learn that the stone used in some magnificent modern buildings is of a perishable nature, and that it already shews evident symptoms of decay. Most of our public buildings, and the finest of our private residences, have unfortunately been constructed, or have the ornamental portions formed of stone so liable to perish, that a short period of time has been sufficient to make sad destruction of the more delicate mouldings and other sculpture. The entire front of the Banqueting House, Whitehall, was recently gone over, and all the capitals, cornices, and foliage carefully recut. Other structures have undergone a similar renovation; and a new face was thus given to the ornaments, only to suffer from the ravages of succeeding seasons.

The vases on the screen walls of Devonshire House, Piccadilly, are obvious specimens of the inevitable destruction of works of art, the material of which they are formed being insufficient to resist the influence of the weather, and numerous other instances could be readily given. In this variable climate, which tries the most compact and hardest stone, it is of the utmost importance that the most durable should be provided for exterior purposes.

Of all erections exposed to the weather, sepulchral monuments are those for which stone should be employed which is suited to stand the effects of a British climate. A visit to the cemeteries of the metropolis will afford ample proof of the injudicious adoption of those materials at present so generally in use. After a severe winter, the dilapidations which the monuments, slabs, and head-stones have undergone, are lamentable; and numerous masons and sculptors may then be seen busily occupied in chipping, puttying, and pointing, to restore, as they best may, the original appearance.

It cannot but prove a source of mortification for sorrowing friends and relations, on revisiting the last home of the departed, to find, after the course of but a few years, the carefully executed memorials of affection effaced, and the inscriptions almost obliterated; the memento decaying almost equally soon as the body which moulders beneath!

There is indeed another cause which occasions the more rapid deterioration of the monuments, independent of the material, viz., the method of their construction. They may be seen crumbling away on all sides, from being composed of numerous small pieces, thereby requiring a variety of joinings. One is sorry to observe the amount of money which has in so many cases been expended on these sepulchral constructions by afflicted relatives, in the vain hope that they will serve the lasting purpose for which they are intended. No doubt most people are ignorant of the qualities of stone, and submit to the recommendation of the sculptor or mason; but it is astonishing that the superiority of granite over all other materials is not yet acknowledged by its general adoption, especially when so many examples of its fitness are now to be seen. It is, in fact, imperishable; and impracticable as its rugged nature may appear, we see it susceptible of a polish, smooth as the finest marble, and it will retain the nicest mouldings and inscriptions as long and fresh as the monuments of Egypt. It is also to be obtained at a moderate cost; and all expense of periodical reparation will be entirely saved by its use. This is no small consideration, and it is matter of some surprise that the cemetery companies, who agree to keep the monuments in good repair, do not see it advantageous to promote its use.

The manufacture of the Aberdeen and Peterhead granite has been brought to great perfection. It was long thought impracticable, at least it was not attempted to execute any of the finer sculpture in this stone; but statues, as that of the late Duke of Gordon, in Aberdeen, have been formed with success. The columns in the King's Library, British Museum, were thought a wonderful effort of art, and they are undoubtedly fine,—but at what an enormous expense were they executed, and with every care, the stone could not be brought to the required polish without repeated chippings, which had to be filled with scagliola. On the contrary, we see in St. George's Hall, Liverpool, the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and the Carlton Club-house, Pall Mall, specimens of polish without the least flaw in this stone, which, as it is the primary rock, seems destined to become the ultimately remaining evidence of architectural and sculptural skill. J. LOGAN.

THE ACCUMULATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS ADVANTAGEOUS FOR THE MANY.

MONS. THIERS is labouring zealously to refute the erroneous opinions of the communists held by so many of the operatives of France. In one of his letters, where he is endeavouring to shew them that the wealthy are not all idle, profligate, and wasteful, and that many *work* usefully, though not with their hands, he says,—"Is it not necessary, I repeat, that there should be men devoted to the study of nature, to the discovery of her laws, in order that they may be used for the good of the human race—men fitted to teach the use of water, fire, and the elements; to teach how to constitute and govern societies? It is also true that it is not the rich man who most frequently makes these sublime discoveries, although he sometimes does so; but he it is who encourages them—he it is who contributes to form this enlightened public, for whom the poor and humble scholar labours; he it is who gathers together vast libraries, and who reads Sophocles, Virgil, Dante, Galileo, Descartes, Bossuet, Molière, Racine, Montesquieu, and Voltaire. If he himself do not read them, it is in his house, around him, that they are read, enjoyed, and appreciated, and where is collected that enlightened and polished society possessed of fine and practised taste, for whom genius writes, sings, or covers the canvass with a thousand hues. Sometimes this rich man is himself a good judge; sometimes, also, he is one of those great minds who do not limit themselves to merely enjoying the works of genius, but who also produce them. He is the wealthy Sallust—the wealthy Seneca—the wealthy Montaigne—the wealthy Buffon—the wealthy Lavoisier; he is also the eminent statesman who presides over the destinies of his country."

He goes on to shew how a father, accumulating riches by industry, creates for his children the leisure necessary for the cultivation of the higher sciences by which society is advanced, and illustrates his position by the following sketch of the illustrious

FAMILY OF THE MEDICIS.

"John di Medicis, in 1400, laid the foundation of the fortune of his family. Gentle, prudent, industrious, and possessing in the highest degree the genius of commerce, he amassed immense riches, and, like a wise man, averse to meddling in public affairs, being, according to Machiavelli, even somewhat of a melancholy disposition, he advised his children never to approach the Government. 'Remember,' he said to them, when on his death-bed, 'Remember that I never went to the Old Palace (the Government Palace), except when summoned thither.'

Happily his advice was not very strictly followed. His son, Cosmo di Medicis, surrounded by the most learned masters, by whom he was instructed in arts, sciences, and policy, and gifted with a daring genius, mixed, in spite of his father's advice, in public affairs; was proscribed and enthusiastically recalled; did not himself govern, but for thirty years influenced the Florentine republic; caused the splendid palace of his family (the Palazzo Ricardi) to be built for him by Michelozzo, numbered among his associates Masaccio, Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donatello, and Pozzi, founded Greek schools in Florence, added further to the fortune of his family, and, although a politician and a scholar, remained a merchant. This merchant, however, quitted his warehouses on certain holidays, and went to the charming retreat of Caffaggiolo to read,—can you guess what? To read the *Dialogues of Plato*, which Poggi had translated for him, and for which Cosmo had paid a large sum of gold. His son Pietro scarcely survived him, and the glory of his house passed to his grandson, him whom posterity has never ceased to love and admire under the name of *Lorenzo the Magnificent*. He, still more disobedient to the coun-

To learn about PDF Compression and OCR visit ThePaperlessOffice.org